

hip to be cubed

The Loftcube is the answer to coping with a matchbox-sized apartment.





Photographed by STEFFEN JANICKE

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Sometimes it becomes irresistible for the modern urban apartment-dweller to do something needlessly hip: throw on a faux-ironic T-shirt, subscribe to McSweeney's, maybe purchase a Vespa. But these urges are for your everyday trendsetters; those with only moderate ambition, who haven't the ability to take unnecessary coolness to higher levels. For overachievers, living in indoor apartments only limits their capacity to advertise their opinions to the outside world. These people need something beyond a one-floor walk-up; something that places them on the roof of all trends. Fancy yourself an upwardly mobile style-leader? Look no further. You now (almost) have the Loftcube.

Werner Aisslinger, the designing force behind the Loftcube, admittedly took the core spirit of the dropout movement that carved communes across U.S. Western towns in the 1960s, then combined it with a modern, minimalist approach and a refined European influence to create an apartment-tent hybrid aimed to take advantage of some of the world's most unoccupied space: building rooftops. His goal is to provide a reinvented wheel for "young mobile professionals" or those who "work in changing locations" seeking the ever-present goal of "metropolitan life" and "new ways of living." (As we all constantly do.)

Inside the Loftcube is a too-sleek design layout, featuring a separate bathroom and kitchen. The interior (which measures 6.60 m x 6.60 m x 3.00 m, or in feet: 22 x 22 x 10) provides for a surprising amount of room, able to fit roughly the same amount of furniture as a typical New York City studio apartment. The only difference is that if you can't stand your noisy downstairs neighbor, you can pick up and move to the rooftop next door—if you've got a small army, that is. According to Studio Aisslinger's spokesperson, Manuel Vital, Loftcube assembly would require merely the efforts of a "four-man team working for three days, provided that the roof has been prepared," which gives new meaning to the idea of getting a few buddies to help you move.

Given that the Loftcube also weighs in at 2.5 metric tons, the additional question arises of how both building owners and superintendents have reacted to the idea of "preparing" to have one perched upon their rooftops. "We've set up partnerships with real estate companies in Germany who will prepare several rooftops for Loftcube living," says Vital. The partnerships offer to provide tenants with essentials like utility line connections, and also scouting services for those who want to go Loftcube first, place-to-put-it later.

Investors have allegedly opened up to Aisslinger's idea. "We have enormous interest worldwide and many people want to become Loftcube distributors in their areas," says Vital. "We are working with several business partners and hope to see the first mass-produced Loftcubes in 2005." The studio remains dedicated to the accessibility and utility of the project and plans to align itself with distributors interested in making this an affordable option for those interested (if \$66,000 for a D.I.Y mobile rooftop efficiency is, in your terms, a bargain). **MIKE SCALISE**

For more information about the Loftcube or any other of Studio Aisslinger's designs, visit Aisslinger.de or call (49-1) 30 31 50 54 00.